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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2364 (2017), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2018 and requested me to report on a quarterly basis on its implementation, focusing on progress in taking forward the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (see S/2015/364 and Add.1) and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it.

II. Major political developments

2. The political and security situation has significantly deteriorated since my previous report (S/2017/478) and the adoption of resolution 2364 (2017) on 29 June. The resumption of fighting between the signatory armed groups in northern Mali, growing insecurity in the centre of the country and mounting political turmoil surrounding the constitutional review process have delayed the implementation of the Agreement. In response to these challenges, MINUSMA extended its good offices to assist Malian parties in finding solutions to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement. Progress was made with the signature of a truce between the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) and the Platform coalition of armed groups on 23 August and of a document of commitments that includes a definitive cessation of hostilities. President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita also decided to stay the constitutional referendum on 18 August.

A. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali after the end of the interim period

3. Building on the positive momentum registered during the previous reporting period, the Government and the signatory armed groups committed to prioritizing the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali beyond the expiration of the interim period on 20 June. In this regard, the High Representative of the President of the Republic of Mali for the Implementation of the Algiers Peace Agreement, supported by the international mediation team and MINUSMA, facilitated dialogue between the signatory parties within the consultation framework agreed upon at the high-level meeting of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 10 February. In addition, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali organized separate meetings with the signatory

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armed groups to forge a consensus on the operationalization of interim authorities in Kidal; the return of the Governor to Kidal; and the deployment of the Operational Coordination Mechanism and mixed patrols in Kidal and Timbuktu. On 12 June, the signatory parties reached an agreement on a revised road map for the implementation of the Agreement and decided to establish the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal by 20 July. This did not materialize, as violent clashes erupted between CMA and the Platform in the Kidal and Ménaka regions on 6 and 11 July, respectively.

4. The Agreement Monitoring Committee met again on 11 July, and members of the international community and the Government strongly condemned the resumption of hostilities and called for an immediate truce. The Committee welcomed the decision taken on 22 June by the Government to establish a good offices mission for Kidal and the Niger Delta led by Mahmoud Dicko, head of the High Islamic Council. The good offices mission held meetings with traditional leaders and civil society representatives affiliated with CMA in Kidal on 27 July and those affiliated with the Platform in Gao on 1 August. Both groups issued communiqués following their respective meetings with Mr. Dicko. While CMA advocated for the initial deployment of a partial operational coordination mechanism to Kidal, excluding Platform elements, the Platform insisted on its full-fledged deployment, as well as a regional power-sharing arrangements. No agreement was reached on the matter.

5. The Special Representative continued to lead the international community's good offices efforts in support of the Government's initiative to obtain an immediate cessation of hostilities. After weeks of fighting, resulting in a significant number of casualties and the displacement of hundreds of families in the Kidal region, on 23 August the armed groups signed a document committing them to a 15-day extendable truce, which was renewed for one month on 6 September. Following reconciliation talks between CMA and the Platform, held from 15 to 20 September in Bamako, the signatory armed groups signed a document of commitments, which provided for, among other measures, a definitive cessation of hostilities and the relaunch of the finalization of the timeline for the full implementation of the Agreement. MINUSMA military observers and the mixed monitoring and verification teams conducted investigations into allegations of ceasefire violations in the Kidal and Ménaka regions. Conclusive evidence was difficult to obtain, since the clashes had occurred in remote areas without a permanent MINUSMA presence.

6. On 22 July, the working group on the independent observer, chaired by the High Representative of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel, Pierre Buyoya, submitted a list of three qualified candidates for the post of independent observer. Consultations are ongoing.

7. On 5 September 2017, the Security Council adopted resolution 2374 (2017), which imposed a travel ban and an assets freeze on individuals or entities designated as threatening the peace, security or stability of Mali. The resolution also established a new Sanctions Committee, mandated to monitor implementation of the sanctions measures and to designate individuals and entities subject to those measures, as well as a panel of experts, to assist the Committee in carrying out its mandate, through periodic reporting.

Political and institutional measures

8. The full operationalization of the interim authorities continued to be hampered by internal rivalries and limited administrative, budgetary and planning capacities. Nonetheless, the interim authorities in Gao, Ménaka, Taoudenni and Timbuktu adopted a priority action plan aimed at enabling access to State funds for the

delivery of basic services. In Kidal, disagreements between the armed groups over the establishment of mixed patrols prevented the return of the Platform members who were members of the interim authorities, thereby delaying their operationalization. On 28 June, the Peacebuilding Fund launched a capacity-building project for the Ménaka and Taoudenni interim authorities on aspects relating to territorial division, public works and the provision of basic services.

9. Owing to the prevailing insecurity, there was no progress with regard to the redeployment of the civil administration to northern and central Mali. Despite a slight increase in judicial officers, low deployment rates of State officials continued to adversely affect the delivery of basic social services and undermined citizens' confidence in the State. As at 11 September, only 30 per cent of State officials were present at their duty stations in the northern regions and Mopti, compared with 38 per cent in January. On 23 August, the Government announced the appointment of new governors for the Gao and Mopti regions, following months of mobilization by civil society calling for the replacement of the governor in Gao. Also on 23 August, the governor for Kidal conducted a three-day working visit to Kidal, the first since his nomination in February.

10. On 21 June, the Council of Ministers postponed the constitutional referendum planned for 9 July, to allow the Constitutional Court to consider a petition filed by opposition members of Parliament challenging the legality of the constitutional review process. On 4 July, the Constitutional Court ruled that the process was compliant with the constitution but proposed amendments to a number of articles, which the Government accepted. On 9 August, following months of growing tensions and demonstrations in Bamako, the platform "An tè a banna! Touche pas à ma Constitution" comprising, inter alia, political opposition members, civil society and trade union representatives, issued an ultimatum to President Keita requesting that he withdraw the draft constitution. On 18 August, President Keita announced that he was staying the referendum on the Constitution in the nation's higher interest, to preserve a peaceful social climate and to avoid confrontations. Throughout this period, the Special Representative held several meetings with senior government officials, majority and opposition political parties and civil society groups as well as leaders of "An tè a banna! Touche pas à ma Constitution". He urged them to exercise restraint and called for constructive dialogue on the constitutional revision process.

11. The charter for peace, unity and national reconciliation was submitted to President Keita on 20 June. Drawing on the conclusions of the conférence d'entente nationale (conference for national harmony), the charter described a common vision, shared values and guiding principles for the country and a Malian nation State. CMA immediately rejected the charter as a reaction to the Government's decision not to refer to Azawad as a political and institutional entity in it. President Keita dismissed the conference's recommendation that the Government enter into negotiations with terrorist groups.

Defence and security measures

12. Progress on the implementation of interim defence and security measures was slow, owing to a lack of trust between the signatory parties, the volatile security situation and the absence of clearly defined integration criteria, including a decision on rank harmonization. The failure by the signatory armed groups to submit lists of their combatants continued to remain the main obstacle to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process scheduled to start on 15 October 2017. Signatory armed groups demanded quotas for the integration of their elements into all security institutions, not only the armed forces as initially agreed. This request had yet to be addressed by the Government. In Gao, poor conduct and discipline on

the part of the mixed patrols contributed to growing discontent among the population, as well as, in some cases, the creation of vigilante groups.

13. On 8 June, an expert-level discussion on security sector reform was held in New York to assess the status of the implementation of the security and defence provisions of the Agreement and strengthen international support in that area. The aim of a high-level meeting planned to take place in Bamako in October is to adopt a Malian-owned partnership framework on security sector reform, outlining the respective roles of Mali and its partners, as well as expected contributions.

14. On 27 July, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Integration Commission confirmed that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process would commence with elements of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in October, followed by deserters from the Malian armed forces from the 2012 crisis, elements from signatory armed groups, and the disarmament of civilian armed groups, in that order. The two commissions also confirmed that the cantonment process would start at the eight existing cantonment sites constructed by MINUSMA, for which the Mission is upgrading security features to mitigate threats during the demobilization process.

15. The first phase of the rehabilitation of the Operational Coordination Mechanism camp in Kidal, with a capacity to host approximately 600 combatants, was completed on 26 July. Given the complexity of the environment, command and control issues, logistical requirements and the need for coordination, the Mission proposed to the Government and signatory armed groups a phased deployment of their combatants to the Kidal Operational Coordination Mechanism. The commanding officers of the Malian armed forces, CMA and the Platform deployed in Kidal on 28 July to plan and organize the arrival of their respective elements.

16. The Technical Commission on Security met on 16 August and decided on the adoption of rules of procedures for the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Gao and the imposition of disciplinary measures following acts of misconduct by its personnel. The signatory armed groups were requested to remove elements that had been involved in criminal acts. CMA responded positively, dismissing six of its members. Commission members and the leadership of the Operational Coordination Mechanism leadership agreed to conduct regular monitoring visits to raise awareness of these matters. The Technical Commission on Security met again on 30 August and agreed on measures to enforce the truce, including movements of troops, vehicles and heavy weapons.

17. The Mission continued the implementation of 34 community violence reduction projects to create conditions conducive to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, obtaining support from the communities and assisting the restoration of State authority and services in remote areas. MINUSMA increased its coordination at both the national and regional levels with the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. MINUSMA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) organized training for 64 members of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the Commission on Integration and the National Council for Security Sector Reform on gender mainstreaming with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. The Government and signatory armed groups also held three workshops on the criteria and the quota requirements for signatory armed groups to qualify for integration into the Malian defence and security forces. However, the integration criteria had yet to be validated by the National Council for Security Sector Reform.

18. In anticipation of the development by the Government of Mali of a policy on the territorial police, the Mission devised a community-oriented policing and

training module to bring the police, gendarmerie, National Guard and civil protection closer to the people and trained 54 elements of the security forces, including 15 women. UN-Women supported the national police in developing an action plan against gender-based violence with the financial support of the Peacebuilding Fund.

B. Support for the Malian defence and security forces

19. The memorandum of understanding between MINUSMA and the Government on the Mission's support for the Malian armed forces remained pending for signature. The Mission provided training, logistics, intelligence sharing, air transport and medical evacuation to Malian defence and security forces. Frameworks for security coordination between MINUSMA and the Malian armed forces were put in place in Gao and Timbuktu. In line with the Mission's mandate to support the redeployment of the reconstituted Malian defence and security forces to the north and centre of the country, the Mission's camp in Léré, Timbuktu region, was handed over to the Malian armed forces on 7 September.

20. In response to a Government request for support in strengthening security for prisons detaining suspected extremists, MINUSMA supported the rehabilitation of two high-security wings in the main prison in Bamako where presumed terrorists were held. On 4 August, this support, together with advice on prison security, led to the adoption of an interministerial order requiring each prison to develop a security plan.

21. International partners continued to conduct joint operations with Malian forces. More than 15 Malian-French operations were conducted during the period, with three main transborder operations along the borders of Mali with Burkina Faso and Niger. The European Union Training Mission continued to train Malian armed forces. During the reporting period, MINUSMA trained 269 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces, including 42 women, in Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu on combating terrorism and organized crime. On 29 June, a coordination mechanism was established between MINUSMA, French forces, the European Union Training Mission and the Malian armed forces.

C. Mine action, weapons and small arms

22. The Mission has trained 283 Malian defence and security forces personnel in explosive threat mitigation since February 2017. The Malian police explosive ordnance disposal team conducted 14 interventions in Bamako. The Malian defence and security forces weapons and ammunition management capacity was reinforced with the training of 98 personnel in safe and secure weapons and ammunition storage and inspection.

23. The Mine Action Service raised awareness of explosive hazards among vulnerable populations in conflict-affected areas, reaching 13,621 individuals (3,890 women, 3,216 men, 3,325 girls and 3,190 boys).

D. Other political developments

24. On 12 June, the Prime Minister, Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga, presented his policy statement to the National Assembly, which adopted it on 15 June in a vote of confidence. The statement set out the Government's priorities until the presidential elections in July 2018, namely, the full implementation of the Agreement, the easing

of social tensions, the implementation of the Presidential Social Emergency Programme and a review of the country's position and role in subregional, regional and international affairs.

25. Although a new date for the constitutional referendum was not announced, the Ministry of Territorial Administration acquired all the required electoral materials, with the exception of ballot papers, to hold the referendum. These materials were deployed to electoral districts, with the exception of Gao. Additionally, materials for the local by-elections, district and regional polls were purchased. In the absence of a new basket fund, the Government faced a financial gap of approximately $32.3 million.

26. In line with the recommendations of the electoral needs assessment mission conducted in April 2017, the United Nations Development Programme and MINUSMA prepared a draft electoral assistance project document to support the 2018-2019 electoral cycle. The draft, on which national and international stakeholders were to be consulted in October, included capacity-building initiatives for electoral management bodies, voter awareness and civic education campaigns and the training and payment of polling station agents. The Mission held four workshops in June with key stakeholders on election-related conflict prevention and mitigation mechanisms. In addition, the Mission built the capacity of electoral management bodies, media, civil society organizations and political party leaders on gender mainstreaming in elections. In July and August, the same groups were briefed on the 2016 Electoral Law by the Mission.

E. Regional developments

27. Insecurity in Mali continued to have significant subregional repercussions, in particular in border areas with Burkina Faso and Niger, where militant groups affiliated to various degrees with Mali-based violent extremist groups claimed responsibility for a number of attacks on security forces and civilians. Four attacks in Soum province in northern Burkina Faso in March and June were claimed by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, as was an assault on 25 August in Abala in Niger, close to the border with Mali. A major terrorist attack on a restaurant in Ouagadougou on 13 August, resulting in 19 deaths, was also suspected to be linked to these networks.

28. On 14 June, the Ministerial Platform for the Sahel met in N'djamena and agreed to revitalize the Platform and its support mechanisms, including through linkages between its working groups and the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

29. On 21 June, the Security Council adopted resolution 2359 (2017), welcoming the deployment by the States members of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) of a joint force to help restore peace and security in the Sahel. On 2 July, Heads of State of the G-5 Sahel and the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, met in Bamako for an extraordinary summit to discuss the operationalization of the joint force. The final declaration of the Summit acknowledged the need to accompany military initiatives with long-term development efforts to address the root causes of insecurity.

30. In line with resolution 2364 (2017), MINUSMA deployed staff officers to Mopti to ensure and facilitate coordination with the G-5 Sahel Force headquarters, located in the Malian armed forces camp in Sévaré, Mopti region.

31. MINUSMA, in partnership with the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Mali, the International Organization for Migration and

G-5 Sahel, continued its advocacy and planning work for the development of a national border security and management strategy. The Mission focused its advisory role on practical border security measures at Anderamboukane, Labezanga and Léré on the Mali-Niger and Mali-Mauritania borders respectively. A Peacebuilding Fund project, aligned with the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel to support communities and address security concerns on the borders of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, was signed by the Governments concerned on 29 August.

III. Major security developments

32. The security situation significantly deteriorated. Since mid-July, the situation in Kidal has worsened, with armed clashes between CMA and the Platform as both groups vied for control of Kidal. Meanwhile, asymmetric attacks continued against MINUSMA and international forces, notably in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. Attacks against the Malian defence and security forces almost doubled as compared with the previous reporting period.

A. Asymmetric and other attacks

33. Violence spiked even more during the reporting period. Violent extremist groups and terrorist elements conducted 75 attacks (44 against Malian defence and security forces, 21 against MINUSMA and 10 against Barkhane), as compared with 37 attacks in the previous reporting period (23 against Malian defence and security forces, 11 against MINUSMA and 3 against Barkhane). These figures represent an increase of 102.7 per cent for all attacks. Casualty figures also increased, with 15 MINUSMA and MINUSMA-related personnel deaths (6 peacekeepers, 1 civilian personnel member and 8 contractors), another 34 injured (25 peacekeepers, 2 civilian personnel and 7 contractors). In the previous reporting period, four peacekeepers were killed and five injured. Similarly, 39 members of the Malian defence and security forces were killed and another 44 were wounded, compared with 33 killed and 54 injured in the previous reporting period. As regards international forces, no French soldiers were killed, while 17 were injured, compared with 2 injured during the previous reporting period.

34. Most asymmetric attacks were claimed by the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. Meanwhile, the violent extremist splinter group, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara, which is currently operating in the Mali-Niger border area, seemed to be exploiting existing inter-community tensions. On 1 June, a mortar attack against the bases of MINUSMA and the French armed forces in Timbuktu city, resulted in the death of one peacekeeper and the wounding of three Malian and eight French peacekeepers, as well as damage inside the camp. The attack was the fourth such attack in Timbuktu in four weeks. On 8 June, assailants launched 15 mortar shells at the MINUSMA camp in Kidal town, and killed four and wounded five peacekeepers in an attack on a Mission position in the city. On 18 June, 5 people died and 10 were wounded in an attack on a hotel near Bamako. On 14 August, armed assailants attacked a MINUSMA camp in Douentza, Mopti region. One peacekeeper and one member of the Malian armed forces were killed, while another peacekeeper was injured. On the same day, unidentified armed men attacked the MINUSMA headquarters in Timbuktu city. Four assailants infiltrated the compound, before being killed. Five security guards, one national contractor and one Malian gendarme died in the attack, and another six MINUSMA peacekeepers were wounded.

35. To address the increasingly volatile and complex security environment, in August, the Government initiated the development of a national action plan on preventing and fighting violent extremism and terrorism, with specific child protection provisions. MINUSMA also continued to support the Malian integrated strategy for the central region by developing a pilot project on community-oriented policing, as well as a dedicated intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance plan. MINUSMA continued to provide support to Malian specialized units dealing with terrorism and transnational organized crime, including investigative and forensic support through the co-location of the Malian Specialized Judicial Unit on Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime. The latter charged nine persons with taking part in acts of terrorism during an ambush on a MINUSMA foot patrol near Aguelhok, Kidal region, in which two peacekeepers were killed on 23 May.

B. Protection of civilians

36. The protection of the situation of civilians significantly deteriorated in the Ménaka and Mopti regions. The limited presence and capability of Malian defence and security forces to respond to threats continued to put civilians at greater risk, as did the ceasefire violations and clashes in the Gao and Kidal regions and the unstable situation in Ménaka.

37. In Koro district, Mopti region, intercommunity violence following the 16 June murder of a prominent Dogon community member resulted in up to 39 fatalities and forced an estimated 3,000 civilians to resettle in nearby areas. A local conflict mediation commission with members of the two main Dogon and Fulani civil society associations travelled to the affected areas to mediate between communities and prevent a new outbreak of mass violence. The commission recommended that Malian defence and security forces did not deploy to the area, given the risk that their presence could aggravate tensions.

38. Other districts in the central region continued to be affected by the presence of violent extremist groups. For the first time in 2017, this type of threat was observed in the Bandiagara district of Mopti. In Mopti district itself, on 4 July, 100 armed elements arrived in Dialoubé to assert control of the town, and on 20 August, armed elements reportedly flogged a dozen women who were not wearing the veil. On 20 July, a wedding party was assaulted and 10 women were beaten 5 km from Mopti town. In early September in Ténenkou district, over 30 civilians, including women, were abducted by presumed violent extremists, seemingly because of the civilians' opposition to previous incursions by these armed elements. All the abductees were subsequently released over the following days further to mediation by traditional authorities.

39. In Timbuktu region, extremist armed elements used intimidation tactics, including one beheading and three kidnappings, which instilled a climate of fear and insecurity. Since July, the repeated presence of elements allegedly affiliated to Hamadou Kouffa, one of the leaders of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, in the Niafunké district, indicated the potential spread of a threat mostly recorded to date in the Mopti region.

40. Four children were killed in crossfire during clashes between signatory armed groups and during armed incidents involving unidentified armed groups, while four others were killed and eight injured by explosive remnants of war in the Gao, Kidal, Ménaka and Mopti regions. Additionally, two adult civilians were killed and eight others injured by improvised explosive devices in the Gao and Kidal regions.

41. From 7 to 10 June, escalating tensions in the Kidal region prompted MINUSMA to conduct Operation Castor, with approximately 300 peacekeepers

deployed to secure the city day and night, including 80 peacekeepers allocated to neighbourhoods assessed as particularly vulnerable. A similar operation was conducted in Aguelhok. In parallel, MINUSMA engaged local community leaders to reduce tensions.

IV. Human rights situation

42. The human rights situation remained of serious concern. Violent clashes involving signatory armed groups and non-compliant armed groups in the Kidal and Ménaka regions were linked to serious abuses, including enforced disappearance and the use and recruitment of children. The rights and fundamental freedoms of local communities, including the freedoms of religion, expression and movement, were also increasingly threatened in the Mopti and Ségou regions by the presence of violent extremist groups.

43. MINUSMA documented 112 cases of human rights violations and abuses across the country, involving 348 victims, of whom 3 were women and 21 were children, compared with 66 cases and 115 victims in the previous reporting period. The cases included 13 instances of extrajudicial and arbitrary killings, 9 of enforced disappearance, 15 of ill-treatment, 9 of child recruitment and use, 4 of conflict-related sexual violence and 31 of unlawful and arbitrary detention. Signatory armed groups and some members of the Malian defence and security forces remained among the main alleged perpetrators of human rights abuses.

44. On 5 August, the Mission issued a press release on some of the gravest cases documented, announcing that it had confirmed 34 allegations of human rights abuses in the Kidal region, including enforced disappearances and recruitment and use of children. MINUSMA further confirmed the existence of two larger graves, as well as individual tombs, in Anéfit, containing the corpses of individuals reportedly killed at the time of clashes in the region. The Mission is verifying the status and identities of those killed, as well as the circumstances leading to the killings.

45. The Malian authorities arrested 116 individuals on terrorism-related charges, of whom 106 were released, including 5 boys and 2 females. Among the 116 arrested, 22 claimed to have been ill-treated, while 60 were detained by the gendarmerie without an arrest warrant. As at 11 September, 239 individuals held on terrorism charges, including 5 boys, remained in detention in State institutions. CMA and the Platform detained at least 70 individuals (37 on conflict-related matters and 33 on law enforcement-related matters) in areas under their control. The total number of individuals who were still being detained by signatory armed groups was at least 21 civilians and 43 combatants from opposing signatory armed groups, including those detained during previous periods.

46. MINUSMA continued to assist the Government to combat impunity and promote reconciliation. In August, MINUSMA shared 151 cases of human rights violations and abuses verified in 2017 with the Ministry of Justice for review and follow-up. The Mission has established a similar sharing mechanism with the Chief of Staff of the Malian Armed Forces to address cases allegedly involving Malian armed forces. MINUSMA monitored the trial of the former self-proclaimed commissioner of the Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest (MUJAO) Islamic police in Gao, which opened on 18 August, for crimes committed in northern Mali in 2012 and 2013. On 21 August, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the illegal possession of weapons of war, criminal conspiracy and aggravated assault and for breaching national security.

47. MINUSMA continued to raise awareness among Malian defence and security forces of human rights principles. The Mission trained 45 members of the Malian armed forces deployed to Mopti on human rights and international humanitarian law. As part of the European Union Training Mission in Mali training sessions, MINUSMA sensitized 181 Malian armed forces elements based in Koulikoro. In July, MINUSMA organized a two-day conference, attended by 13 members of the diplomatic corps and regional organizations and 35 high-ranking Malian defence and security forces officers, on the implementation of the Due Diligence Policy on Human Rights.

48. MINUSMA continued to support the operationalization of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, including at the regional level. As of 11 September, 1,585 individuals had made statements to the Commission, bringing the total for 2017 to 5,303.

49. During the first semester (January to June 2017), the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System recorded 1,368 cases of gender-based Violence. With a view to addressing conflict-related sexual violence, MINUSMA continued to engage parties to the conflict on concrete commitments, through sustained advocacy and technical assistance. On 7 July in Kidal, CMA signed a unilateral communiqué to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence, for which they are listed in my reports on conflict-related sexual violence. Similarly, MINUSMA continued to provide capacity-building for the Platform to implement its communiqué, signed on 30 June 2016.

50. It was confirmed that, during the August clashes in Kidal between CMA and the Platform, nine children were recruited by the Platform. They were detained by CMA, then handed over to MINUSMA and UNICEF for interim care pending family tracing and reunification on 11 August. Seven child casualties as a result of crossfire incidents and explosive hazards in the Gao, Kidal and Mopti regions were documented.

V. Humanitarian situation

51. The deteriorating security situation in Mali further negatively impacted the dire humanitarian situation. Given the limited presence of State authority and the lack of sustainable development gains in central and northern Mali, humanitarian needs persisted. Humanitarian actors therefore continued to play an essential role in meeting the basic needs of vulnerable people.

52. Displacements continued to occur regularly owing to violence in the Kidal and Ménaka regions and intercommunity violence in the Mopti region, increasing the number of internally displaced persons from some 52,000 in May to approximately 55,400. Since January 2017, more than 30,000 people have been newly displaced. The number of Malian refugees in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger declined from some 141,500 to approximately 140,900.

53. As part of the Government-led national response plan to food insecurity during the lean season, the United Nations, in collaboration with partners, provided seasonal food assistance to 267,500 people out of 601,000 severely food-insecure people in the crisis-affected areas. The United Nations also provided emergency food and nutritional assistance to newly displaced persons.

54. Since the previous report, the overall number of closed schools remained at 500, resulting in 150,000 children out of school in the Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu regions. The closures were mainly due to insecurity and threats against education personnel.

55. A total of 43, mostly crime-related, security incidents affecting humanitarian actors, such as direct attacks, break-ins at humanitarian compounds and vehicle theft, were registered, compared with 27 cases in the previous reporting period. On 21 August, a vehicle belonging to a United Nations agency travelling in the Timbuktu city was attacked by unidentified armed assailants and two United Nations personnel were injured. Two non-governmental organization workers were killed and seven others injured in separate incidents. Armed groups temporarily blocked humanitarian assistance to the northern regions, including food assistance to some areas of the Kidal and Ménaka regions. The presence of explosive hazards targeting armed forces in the main areas of humanitarian intervention continued to threaten access to the affected population. In a new trend, humanitarians are coming under direct attack by armed men within city limits.

56. Humanitarian funding continued to be inadequate to meet current needs and provide life-saving assistance. The budgetary requirements of the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, which provides for assistance for 1.56 million people, were reviewed in August to reflect increased needs related to food insecurity during the lean season. The funding requirements increased from $293 million to $304.7 million, of which only 26.3 per cent had been received as at 11 September.

VI. Economic development and cultural preservation

57. While Mali succeeded in sustaining economic growth and subduing inflation, the majority of the population continues to live below the poverty level. The International Monetary Fund extended its $43.96 million national financial programme until July 2018. However, prevailing insecurity continued to undermine the rule of law and provision of basic social services, particularly in the north and parts of central Mali.

58. The Government held a workshop in Bamako from 17 to 19 July to further define the development strategy for the northern regions. The workshop called for additional stakeholder consultations on the establishment of a sustainable development fund and for the Ministry of Economy and Finance to report on the status of pledges received pursuant to the International Conference for the Economic Recovery and Development of Mali, held in Paris on 22 October 2015.

59. The United Nations country team and MINUSMA supported the consolidation of peace through a range of socioeconomic initiatives aligned with the Government's development objectives. The World Food Programme reinforced social protection for vulnerable populations, the United Nations Children's Fund supported school education for children, in particular girls, and the United Nations Population Fund worked on integrated reproductive and sexual health services. During the reporting period, 34 quick-impact projects were implemented to strengthen the capacity of the State and address the basic needs of the population in the north and centre of the country. These included training on administrative and legal procedures for local government officials in Gao, Kidal, Ménaka, Mopti, Taoudenni and Timbuktu and the provision of office equipment and material to the regional development agencies in Gao and Mopti. Projects were also used to provide access to safe water for about 3,000 people in the Gao, Kidal, Mopti, and Timbuktu regions; education for 610 children in the Gao and Taoudenni regions; and health care for 17,940 people in remote areas of the Kidal and Mopti regions.

60. On 5 July, the Peacebuilding Fund steering committee selected governance and intercommunity conflict as priority issues for its 2018-2020 project phase and added the Mopti and Ségou regions to its areas of intervention.

VII. Mandate implementation and transition planning

61. MINUSMA has begun developing a mission-wide strategic plan, comprising a phased approach to mandate implementation, a transition strategy and an exit strategy. Key considerations include prioritization and sequencing of the mission's core mandated tasks, taking into account evolving realities on the ground, while also ensuring that the process is inclusive, transparent and based on best practices, as well as further integration with and the handover of specific tasks to the United Nations country team. Given budgetary constraints, the Mission is also considering how to best harness commitments of other stakeholders including the Government and signatory armed groups, which must be fully engaged in the peace process.

VIII. Capacities of the Mission

A. Military

62. The force level of 13,289 military personnel comprises 40 military observers, 486 staff officers and 12,763 contingent personnel. As at 11 September, 11,273 personnel, or 85 per cent of the authorized strength, had been deployed. Women account for 2.2 per cent of military personnel.

63. A technical review conducted by the Office of Military Affairs from 14 to 25 July identified a series of measures to increase operational forces through reorganization of units, review of command and control capabilities, medical coverage and reduction in the number of camps, thereby reducing static guard requirements. The Mission is looking to improve intelligence gathering by deploying reconnaissance capabilities at the sector and battalion levels.

64. While little progress was made on force generation, important steps were taken in preparation for the deployment of key assets to improve the force's mobility, intervention and deterrence capabilities. The advance party of the quick reaction force arrived in Mopti on 10 August, while the main body and helicopter detachment are scheduled to deploy later this year. A construction party arrived in Gao in June to begin the camp construction which would accommodate one combat convoy company, with works scheduled to be completed in October. The deployment of at least two other combat convoy companies is planned for October and December. Progress was made in generating pledges for an explosive ordnance disposal company, a special forces company, airfield support units and armed and military utility helicopter units. The lack of armoured personnel carriers remained a major obstacle to the Mission's operations; meanwhile some troop-contributing countries made progress in reducing their shortages. MINUSMA continues to require an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance company for Kidal. Insufficient contingent-owned equipment and the self-sustainment capabilities of some infantry units also remain a concern. The lack of air assets compromised the Mission's response across its area of responsibility, including in support of its protection of civilians mandate. Only three out of seven helicopter units, or six out of nine attack helicopters and four out of fourteen medium utility helicopters, are deployed or operational. The medium utility helicopter unit deployed to Kidal, which was damaged in the attack of October 2016, was unable to resume operations and is scheduled to be repatriated by the beginning of October. The military fixed-wing air transport unit based in Gao, which was damaged in the attack of November 2016, was unable to resume operations and will be repatriated. MINUSMA has deployed commercial air transport resources to address the support requirements in each location. Regrettably, the Mission lost an attack helicopter and its crew members during a crash on 26 July.

French forces

65. In accordance with resolution 2364 (2017), French forces continued to intervene in support of MINUSMA within the limits of their capacities and areas of deployment.

B. Police

66. The ceiling of 1,920 police personnel comprised 345 individual police officers and 1,575 formed police personnel. As at 11 September 2017, 1,685 personnel, or 88 per cent of its authorized strength, had been deployed, of whom 84 per cent were individual police officers (17 per cent of whom were women) and 74 per cent formed police unit personnel (4 per cent of whom were women). MINUSMA police continue to require an additional 12 armoured personnel carriers for formed police units, six armoured cars for individual police officers, as well as 45 individual police officers with specialized expertise, including in forensics, investigations, riverine police capacity, security sector reform, counter-terrorism, serious organized crime and drug trafficking.

C. Civilian personnel

67. As at 11 September, 79 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 80 per cent of international staff, 77 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 79 per cent of national staff. Women held 26 per cent of the international posts, 32 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 19 per cent of national staff posts.

D. Camp construction and securing supply routes

68. The Mopti camp for the quick reaction force was completed on 11 August and occupied by the advance party. The construction of the Mopti integrated super camp is under way and scheduled for completion in February 2018. Works to upgrade the Gao airport runway have commenced and are scheduled to be completed in April 2018.

69. A prototype for overhead protection for sleeping quarters for personnel operating under the United Nations security management system was developed and tested in August. Revised accommodation layouts for Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu have been completed and roll-out is expected to start in the next quarter. The redesign of the layout of Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Tessalit and Timbuktu camps is under way. Major upgrades to defence works in all Mission camps are expected to be completed by December 2017. These works include the installation of swing and boom gates in Ménaka, upgrades to the ditch and berm around Kidal camp, the construction of new bunkers in Timbuktu, reinforcement of the main gates, ditch and berm around the super camp in Gao and the construction of a ditch and berm around the new camp in Mopti.

70. Two transportable armoured air traffic control towers were delivered to Gao and to Kidal, using the Cotonou-Niamey-Gao convoy route. The Togolese formed police unit moved its contingent-owned equipment from Niamey to Ansongo for deployment to Ménaka. Between July and August, 44 containers of Chinese contingent-owned equipment were moved to Gao along this route.

E. Environment

71. MINUSMA finalized its Mission-wide environmental action plan. Regional environmental committees were established and waste/environmental focal points identified in each military and police camp to support the Mission's environmental management system. An environmental awareness session was included in the Mission's mandatory induction training.

IX. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

72. The programme criticality assessment was reviewed and updated in August 2017. MINUSMA took measures to enhance its information collection and analysis capacity by establishing a Mission secured network. The merger of Force Headquarters Intelligence Branch and the former All Sources Information Fusion Unit was completed.

73. MINUSMA has taken key steps to improve its security infrastructure, as described in paragraph 69. The Mission currently has sense-and-warn systems deployed in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu. Plans are under way to install similar systems in other locations. The indirect fire attack of 8 June on the MINUSMA camp in Kidal demonstrated the value of sense-and-warn systems, which enabled personnel to seek shelter in bunkers while multiple shells exploded within the camp. Some of the equipment was severely damaged during attacks in Kidal and Timbuktu, prompting the temporary relocation of non-essential staff. The security of United Nations premises and personnel was also reinforced by means of additional patrols and escorts, as well as the deployment of quick reaction forces. Integrated defence plans were also finalized for the regions and Bamako.

74. In response to the asymmetric threats faced by the Mission's logistics convoys, MINUSMA continued to provide training on the identification and mitigation of improvised explosive device threats to 370 Mission military personnel and delivered a training course on leading these operations in an asymmetric threat environment for convoy commanders to 43 personnel.

75. The Mission's capacity to conduct prompt medical and casualty evacuation remained constrained by the shortage of night operation capable military attack and utility helicopters in Kidal and Mopti region, limiting the ability of the civilian specialized aeromedical evacuation helicopters and teams to operate in combat situations. The Mission increased the number of civilian MI-8 helicopters in Timbuktu to maintain full casualty/medical evacuation coverage. One MI-8 was stationed in Ménaka to provide the Mission with immediate evacuation capability in the region.

X. Conduct and discipline

76. In addition to the two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse received in January and June 2016, which are both pending investigation by the relevant troop-contributing country, a third allegation was reported in August, also pending investigation. MINUSMA continued its prevention activities, including training, public information and outreach activities to inform the local population about the United Nations standards of conduct, in particular the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

XI. Observations

77. I am deeply concerned by recent developments in Mali, in particular the resumption of violent clashes between the signatory armed groups and the political turmoil surrounding the constitutional referendum. These developments are indicative of deeply rooted rifts within Malian society that need to be addressed in order to bring new momentum in the peace process. Regrettably, almost no progress was made in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. As the country enters an intense electoral period, culminating in the 2018 presidential elections, the signatory parties' unwavering support for and commitment to the peace process is a prerequisite for preventing a descent into a vicious cycle of violence and chaos, jeopardizing the future of Mali and its chances for lasting peace.

78. The gains in the peace process could easily be reversed if not rapidly consolidated. Lack of progress in the operationalization of the interim authorities and establishment of the Operational Coordination Mechanisms in Kidal and Timbuktu sends the wrong message. Insufficient progress has been made on the institutional reforms that would allow for the implementation of key provisions of the Agreement, such as comprehensive security sector reform or the adoption of a revised constitution. Time is of the essence now.

79. The resumption of hostilities exacerbated security risks in northern Mali. While I welcome the signing of a truce, the armed groups must now demonstrate that they remain truly steadfast in their commitment to the peace process and the restoration of State authority and services. I call upon these groups not only to respect the definitive cessation of hostilities but to contribute proactively to the implementation of the remaining provisions of the Agreement. Their commitment must include a submission of their finalized lists of candidates for the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and (re)integration processes, so that these processes can commence in earnest. Stabilization and peacebuilding in northern Mali will otherwise remain unattainable, and the most vulnerable populations will continue to suffer from the absence of long overdue peace dividends. In this regard, I take note of the adoption of resolution 2374 (2017) and will make the necessary arrangements to support the new Sanctions Committee and the prompt establishment of the Panel of Experts and to ensure close cooperation with MINUSMA.

80. I welcome President Keita's decision to stay the constitutional referendum to appease social tensions and prevent a further escalation of protests. It is the Government's responsibility to quickly determine the modalities for a new constitutional review process that is as inclusive and as participatory as possible. The peace process can be successful only if Malians assume full ownership and responsibility for it. In this regard, the inclusion of women in the process remains essential. The benchmark matrix developed between the Government and MINUSMA should be used among the Malian parties to ensure greater accountability and ownership. I call upon signatory parties to step up their commitment, but also upon opposition parties to demonstrate wisdom and unity of purpose, while the Government needs to embrace its unique leadership role in the peace process.

81. Delays in the redeployment and extension of State authority throughout the country and the decrease in the number of State officials across northern and central Mali are alarming. I am deeply worried by the increase in security incidents by armed elements and extremist armed groups across central Mali, particularly in the Mopti and Segou regions. Here, the emergence of vigilante groups to respond to

unaddressed security threats, particularly in remote areas, is also troubling. This situation is likely to fuel additional violence and deepen existing fissures between communities. I therefore call upon the Government to strengthen the presence of the civilian administration and defence and security forces in these areas and to effectively tackle the rising insecurity, while respecting international human rights obligations. MINUSMA is committed to reinforcing its support to the Malian defence and security forces and the signature of the memorandum of understanding with the Malian armed forces will be an important step towards the consolidation of this support.

82. The situation in northern and central Mali requires more than security measures alone. To effectively address the complex challenges and bring security, stability and development to these regions, a multidimensional approach is needed, encompassing justice, development, security, education and job creation, especially for disaffected youth and young people in general. In that regard, MINUSMA remains engaged in support of the Government's multidimensional strategy for the central regions in collaboration with United Nations agencies and key donors.

83. Meanwhile, the recent deployment of the Mission's quick reaction force is an encouraging development. Its full deployment will further increase the Mission's mobility and deterrence capabilities. The Secretariat is doing its utmost to complete force generation, to implement the recommendations of the last military technical review and to help the Mission reach full operational capability.

84. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team are also committed to continuing to support the consolidation of peace and the delivery of peace dividends through a range of socioeconomic initiatives, in line with the Government's development priorities. The finalization of the development strategy for the northern regions is vital for supporting Malian authorities. I urge the Government to adopt this strategy without delay and call upon the international community to deliver on their pledges.

85. I am disturbed by the cross-border dimension of insecurity in Mali and the growing threat posed by terrorist groups to neighbouring countries, including Burkina Faso and Niger. I condemn in the strongest terms the despicable crimes perpetrated by these groups. I welcome the enhanced regional ownership of peace and security-related initiatives, including efforts towards the deployment of the G-5 Sahel joint force, which can also contribute to an enabling environment for MINUSMA to fully implement its mandate. The success of the joint force, and that of MINUSMA, is intrinsically linked to the progress of the Malian peace process. I appeal to the international community to support this regional undertaking, with predictable financial and logistical support.

86. The prevailing insecurity undermines the rule of law and the provision of basic services, particularly in the north and in some parts of the centre. The window of opportunity for the Government to provide long-awaited peace dividends is slowly narrowing. The humanitarian situation continues to worsen. I am extremely concerned by the great number of schools that remain closed and increasing food insecurity in the crisis-affected regions. I call upon international partners to contribute generously to the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, which remains significantly underfunded, to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

87. I commend humanitarian actors for continuing to support the Government in the provision of basic social services to the people in need against a backdrop of increasing attacks on their personnel. Such attacks constitute war crimes and I call upon all parties to contribute to the creation of a safe humanitarian space. Ensuring unhindered humanitarian access will remain an essential task of the Mission.

88. I remain concerned about the numerous allegations of serious human rights violations and abuses, particularly in the Kidal and Mopti regions. The Mission will continue to support the Malian authorities in their efforts to combat impunity. The establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry offers the opportunity to enhance judicial access for the numerous victims and families affected by the conflict.

89. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team are committed to continuing to support the consolidation of peace and the delivery of peace dividends through a range of socioeconomic initiatives, in line with the Government's development priorities. The finalization of the development strategy for the northern regions is vital for supporting the Malian authorities. I urge the Government to adopt this strategy without delay and call upon the international community to deliver on their pledges.

90. I am deeply saddened by the considerable loss of life among Malian defence and security forces and United Nations peacekeepers. I express my heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Mali, MINUSMA troop-contributing and police-contributing countries and the bereaved families of the victims. No efforts must be spared to improve the safety and security of MINUSMA personnel, including through the installation and full operationalization of medical and casualty evacuation capabilities.

91. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his indefatigable work and dedication. I also wish to pay special tribute to the men and women of MINUSMA for their continued commitment to peace in Mali despite the extremely difficult circumstances. I commend the members of the international mediation team for their sustained support for the Malian parties and encourage Algeria, as the lead mediator, to support renewed impetus to the implementation of the Agreement through the Agreement Monitoring Committee. I express my gratitude to multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as non-governmental organizations and all other partners, for their important contributions in support of peace and stability in Mali.

Annex I

[Original: French]

Benchmarks for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
1. Political and institutional matters				
Significant progress in the implementation of an institutional architecture designed to guarantee the participation and inclusion of all Malian citizens and enable the restoration of State authority throughout the country				
1.1 Establish an institutional architecture based on the principle of free administration and increased representation of communities within national institutions	1.1.1 The interim authorities responsible for the administration of municipalities (communes), districts (cercles) and regions in the north are operational	Ongoing	2017	The interim authorities were installed in the five regions of the north on 20 April 2017
	1.1.2 The Government of Mali has established territorial communities, elected through universal suffrage and with extensive authority, by amending Act No. 93-008 on free administration and Act No. 2012-006 on the administrative organization of the territory	Ongoing	2017	The texts have been drafted but have not yet been approved
	1.1.3 For every region the Government has established a Regional Assembly, elected by direct universal suffrage, to which authorities and resources have been transferred	Ongoing	2017	Adoption of the new election law; the law on territorial communities is being drafted
1.2 Define the authorities of territorial communities by specifying their respective roles and responsibilities, and those of the State	1.2.1 The Government has ensured that each region is able to establish and manage collective infrastructure and basic social services	Implemented		
	1.2.2 Every region has developed an economic, social and cultural development plan and will be responsible for land management	Implemented		

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	1.2.3 Every region is responsible for establishing and implementing a tax system suited to its economic structure and development objectives, in accordance with current legislation	Not implemented		
2. Defence and security aspects				
Implementation and progressive functioning of inclusive defence and security forces that are accountable to citizens and comply with human rights and the rule of law, thereby strengthening national cohesion and contributing to the promotion of regional security				
2.1 Implement reform of the security and defence sectors	2.1.1 Decrees are adopted defining the make-up, role and operation of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the Commission on Integration and the National Council for Security Sector Reform	Implemented		The decrees have been adopted by Cabinet
	2.1.2 The National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the Commission on Integration and the National Council for Security Sector Reform are established in an inclusive manner and are operational	Implemented		All the commissions are operational
	2.1.3 The National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, the Commission on Integration and the National Council for Security Sector Reform have developed a new national vision of defence and security, taking	Ongoing		Completion expected

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	relevant local, national and international factors into account			
2.2 Implement cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for combatants, in accordance with the guiding principles of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and in keeping with international standards	2.2.1 The National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission has drawn up a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and cantonment programme, with the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and other partners	Implemented		The programme was validated in December 2016
	2.2.2 The Commission on Integration has set up a support programme which defines the measures necessary for the reintegration of ex-combatants and takes into account cross-cutting issues (gender equality, human rights and the protection of civilians)	Ongoing	First half of 2017	An outline of the integration benchmarks and technical quotas has been drafted for approval by the National Council for Security Sector Reform
2.3 Reconstitute and progressively redeploy defence and security forces throughout national territory	2.3.1 The Technical Commission on Security and the Operational Coordination Mechanism have submitted an implementation plan for security arrangements in the north, with the deployment of joint patrols to provide security for the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process	Implemented		

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	2.3.2 Under the aegis of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, joint units of combatants from signatory parties and the defence and security forces, including special counter-terrorist units, are operational and carrying out joint patrols that contribute to the restoration of security	Ongoing	First half of 2017	The battalion of the operational coordination mechanism has been established in the Gao region, but it is not fully operational owing to a lack of heavy weapons The refurbishment and equipping by MINUSMA of the operational coordination mechanism camps in Kidal and Timbuktu is ongoing
	2.3.3 The gradual redeployment throughout Mali of reconstituted defence and security forces is in effect and guarantees that security and public order are maintained	Ongoing		Planning is ongoing
3. Humanitarian assistance, socioeconomic and cultural development and the provision of basic social services				
Establishment of structures and mechanisms designed to achieve inclusive, participatory and sustainable local development				
3.1 Create the conditions necessary to facilitate the return, repatriation, resettlement and socioeconomic reintegration of all displaced persons and refugees; enable communities to benefit from peace dividends; and strengthen social cohesion and humanitarian assistance	3.1.1 Establishment of monitoring mechanisms for displaced persons and refugees, in accordance with regional and international instruments	Ongoing		Identification of 30 return zones in 20 priority municipalities by the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) The third meeting of the Mali-Mauritania-UNHCR tripartite commission for the voluntary repatriation of Malian refugees in Mauritania was held on 21 July 2017

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	3.1.2 Neutral and impartial humanitarian assistance is delivered in areas impacted by the crisis to those most vulnerable (residents, returnees, displaced or repatriated persons), enhancing their means of subsistence and resilience	Ongoing		At the end of July 2017, the total required for the humanitarian response plan was increased by 4 per cent to $304.7 million. As at 4 September 2017, only 26 per cent of the plan had been financed Projects totalling $7 million financed by the Central Emergency Response Fund have continued to be implemented in the Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, with a focus on the following areas: shelter/non-food items, water/hygiene/sanitation, nutrition, food security and health UNHCR is delivering food to repatriated adults and children in the Gao, Ménaka, Mopti and Timbuktu regions
	3.1.3 With the support of humanitarian and development partners under the 2015-2017 emergency humanitarian plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, peace dividends are brought to communities in order to reduce socioeconomic disparities among regions, with increased access to basic services in the poorest regions	Ongoing		The humanitarian and development component has been established with different technical and financial partners. The aim is to develop sustainable solutions that will benefit people living in areas affected by the crisis

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
3.2 Mobilize the resources necessary to implement the specific development strategy for the northern regions of Mali	3.2.1 Establishment of a northern development zone with an interregional advisory council, comprising representatives of Regional Assemblies, and with a specific development strategy relevant to the sociocultural and geographic realities and the climate of the region	Ongoing	The development zone's governance bodies will be established once the new regional councils have been established	The specific development strategy for the north was drafted at a national workshop held from 17 to 19 July 2017
	3.2.2 Establishment of a sustainable development fund, comprising the resources pledged during the International Conference for the Economic Recovery and Development of Mali, held in October 2015, with the support of technical and financial partners	Ongoing	2017	It was recommended during the above-mentioned workshop that technical consultations should be held with the signatory movements regarding the sustainable development fund
	3.2.3 Establishment of a regional development agency in each region for programme management and monitoring implementation of the commitments undertaken by the Government to benefit the regions, under the authority of the President of the Regional Assembly	Ongoing		Regional development agencies cannot be established in the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions until the draft law establishing the territorial communities in those regions has been signed
	3.2.4 Programme agreements are concluded between the State and the regions for the implementation of multi-year investment programmes, with the participation of the territorial communities concerned	Ongoing	2016	The planning contract was signed between the State and the Gao region in July 2017. With no regional development agencies in place, those of Ménaka and Taoudenni are pending

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
4. Justice and reconciliation				
Prevent impunity and promote genuine national reconciliation by ensuring legal and judicial assistance and access through the implementation of transitional justice mechanisms and comprehensive justice sector reform, in accordance with international standards				
4.1 Organize a national reconciliation conference on the underlying causes of the conflict	4.1.1 An inclusive national reconciliation conference on the underlying causes of the conflict is organized, with the support of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, to ensure genuine national reconciliation	Implemented	March 2017	The national reconciliation conference was held from 27 March to 2 April 2017
	4.1.2 A charter for peace, unity and national reconciliation is drawn up on the basis of consensus and based on the outcomes of the national reconciliation conference	Partially implemented		The Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation and a mapping of all lands in Mali were submitted to the President of the Republic on 20 June 2017. However, the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad has rejected the Charter in its current form
4.2 Establish transitional justice mechanisms	4.2.1 The Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission is operational and has regional offices throughout the country	Ongoing		Five regional offices out of six are operational A total of 5,267 statements from victims and witnesses have been recorded
	4.2.2 An international commission of inquiry is established and operational	Ongoing		The instrument officially establishing the commission is being prepared
4.3 Reform the justice system and strengthen the rule of law in order to enhance traditional and informal justice mechanisms, improve access to justice for perpetrators and victims, and end impunity	4.3.1 The justice system is strengthened to improve access to justice to justice for perpetrators and victims	Ongoing		Following the appointment and reassignment of judges around the country, judges in the northern regions are gradually taking up their posts. However, the security situation is forcing some to relocate temporarily to other regions

Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	4.3.2 The perpetrators of human rights violations are prosecuted and convicted in accordance with international standards	Ongoing		Since January 2017 and as part of the mechanism for sharing information between MINUSMA and the Ministry of Justice: – Two meetings have been held – A total of 151 documented cases of human rights violations and abuses were transmitted between January and May – A technical adviser to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice has been appointed to monitor the assistance provided by the judicial authorities In 2017, of 102 cases that were brought to trial in criminal court, four individuals were convicted of offences constituting human rights violations or abuses
	4.3.3 The victims of human rights violations, including sexual or gender-based violence, are treated fairly by the justice system, receive reparations and benefit from new judicial protection measures	Ongoing		From 2013 to 2016, at least 132 persons filed complaints of offences constituting conflict-related sexual violence committed between 2012 and 2013 in the northern regions of Mali. As at 31 August 2017, judges had questioned at least 52 of those complainants. No trials have yet begun
	4.3.4 Traditional and customary mechanisms are integrated into the justice system, without prejudice to the sovereign right of the State	Ongoing		A workshop to discuss the issue of traditional justice and the institution of the cadi was held on 27 and 28 July 2017. The aim was to clarify the jurisdiction and role of cadis, with a view to their institutionalization

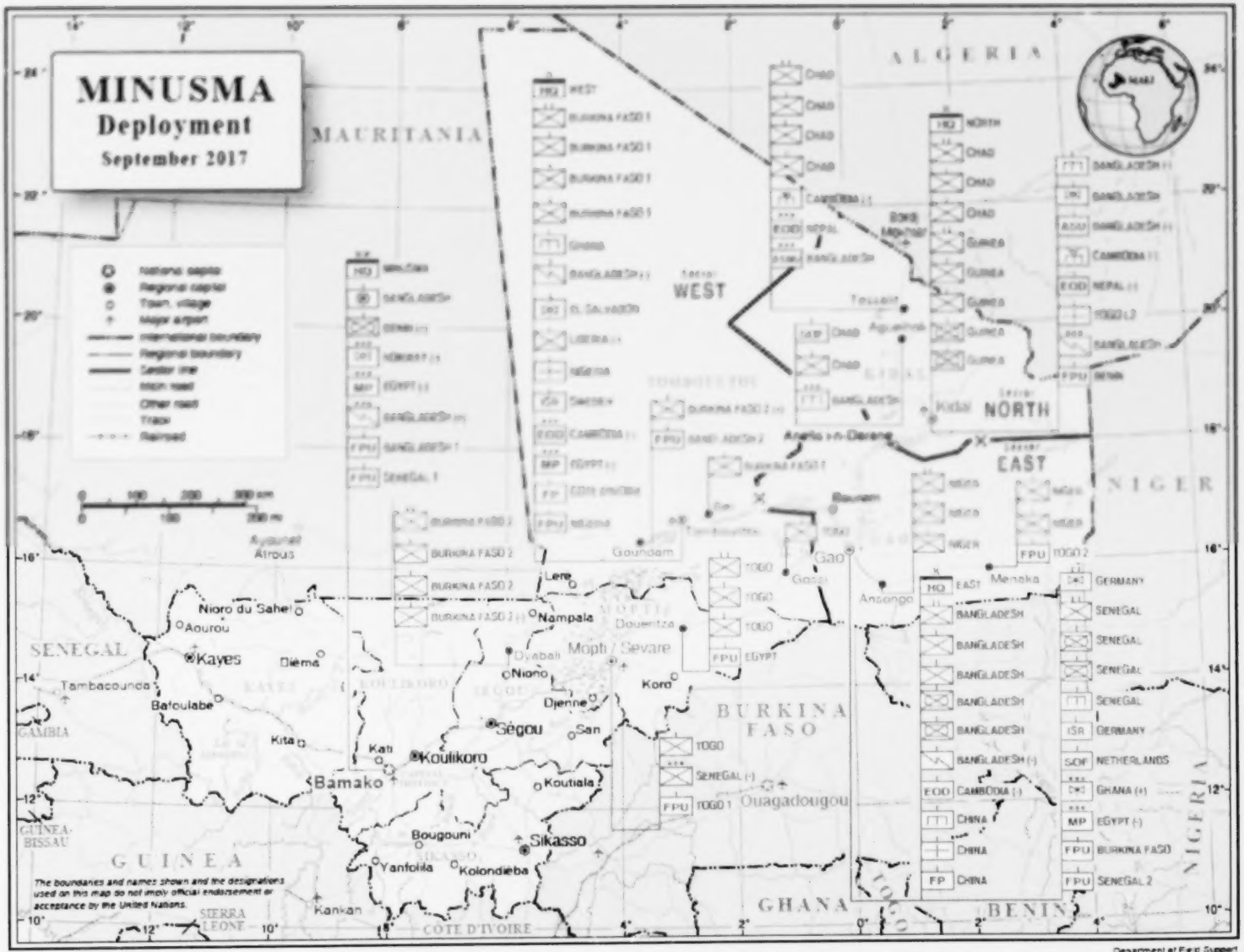
Objectives	*Progress indicators*	*State of implementation*	*Deadline*	*Comments*
	4.3.5 Institutions regulating and protecting specific rights, such as freedom of expression, of the press and of communication, are in place or strengthened and work effectively	Implemented		
	4.3.6 The Anti-Corruption and Financial Crime Commission is established	Implemented		

Annex II

Military and police strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as at 31 August 2017

	Military component			*Police component*								
	Staff officers and units			*Individual police officers*			*Formed police units*			*Total police*		
Country	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Armenia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Austria	3	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bangladesh	1 527	12	1 539	–	–	–	280	–	280	280	–	280
Belgium	17	3	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Benin	261	1	262	13	1	14	140		140	153	1	154
Bhutan	3	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Burkina Faso	1 673	46	1 719	30	1	31	134	6	140	164	7	171
Burundi	–	–	–	3	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
Cambodia	296	7	303	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cameroon	2	–	2	17	–	17	–	–	–	17	–	17
Chad	1 392	6	1 398	3	4	7	–	–	–	3	4	7
China	389	14	403	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Côte d'Ivoire	149	3	152	8	2	10	–	–	–	8	2	10
Czechia	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Denmark	60	5	65	5	–	5	–	–	–	5	–	5
Egypt	74	–	74	5	–	5	140	–	140	145	–	145
El Salvador	93	11	104	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Estonia	10	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Ethiopia	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Finland	5	1	6	7	2	9	–	–	–	7	2	9
France	20	1	21	8	1	9	–	–	–	8	1	9
Gambia	4	–	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Germany	544	15	559	12	4	16	–	–	–	12	4	16
Ghana	221	–	221	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Guinea	847	10	857	10	9	19	–	–	-	10	9	19
Guinea-Bissau	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Hungary	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1
Indonesia	8	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Italy	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Jordan	1	–	1	4	–	4	–	–	–	4	–	4
Kenya	5	4	9	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Latvia	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Liberia	66	7	73	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Lithuania	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

	Military component			Police component								
	Staff officers and units			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Mauritania	5	–	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Nepal	151	4	155	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Netherlands	270	9	279	4	–	4	–	–	–	4	–	4
Niger	855	7	862	19	14	33	–	–	–	19	14	33
Nigeria	69	16	85	1	–	1	118	22	140	119	22	141
Norway	14	2	16	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Portugal	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Romania	1	–	1	7	–	7	–	–	–	7	–	7
Senegal	814	13	827	16	–	16	259	9	268	275	9	284
Sierra Leone	8	–	8	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sri Lanka	7	–	7	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Sweden	192	21	213	4	2	6	–	–	–	4	2	6
Switzerland	5	–	5	4	–	4	–	–	–	4	–	4
Togo	912	28	940	1	8	9	265	13	278	266	21	287
Tunisia	–	–	–	53	2	55	–	–	–	53	2	55
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
United States of America	21	5	26	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Yemen	4	–	4	8	–	8	–	–	–	8	–	8
Total	**11 015**	**252**	**11 267**	**243**	**50**	**293**	**1 336**	**50**	**1 386**	**1 579**	**100**	**1 679**



Map No. 4506 Rev. 30.1 UNITED NATIONS
September 2017 (Colour)

Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2017/812

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2017
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 28 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Further to our letters informing you of the crimes committed by the "international coalition" led by the United States of America and the coalition's attacks against the sovereignty and the territorial integrity and unity of the Syrian Arab Republic and against innocent Syrian civilians, I should like to convey to you the following information:

Hardly a day has gone by over the past few months in which the forces of the illegitimate "international coalition" have not carried out a barbaric act of aggression against innocent civilians and infrastructure in various parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Syrian Arab Republic has sent successive letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council concerning those acts of aggression and repeatedly called upon the Security Council to put an end to them immediately. However, the "international coalition" continues to systematically kill civilians and destroy infrastructure, while the international community remains puzzlingly silent.

On 27 September 2017, "international coalition" warplanes bombarded the town of Suwar in the Dayr al-Zawr countryside with the internationally prohibited substance white phosphorous, killing a number of civilians and injuring others, and causing severe material damage to public and private property.

On 26 September 2017, the air force of the "international coalition" committed a massacre in the town of Markadah, which is located south of Hasakah city, killing three Syrian civilians, two of whom were women, and an Iraqi family of six that had been displaced from Mosul and had fled to Hasakah.

The Syrian Arab Republic again strongly condemns the attacks carried out by and the war crimes and crimes against humanity being committed by the "international coalition". It is regrettable that the membership of the coalition includes States that claim to respect human rights and international law, and boast that they do not commit any war crimes or crimes against humanity. Meanwhile, that coalition continues to unabatedly commit bloody crimes in the name of those States. The Syrian Arab Republic once again requests that the coalition should be disbanded and its attacks halted immediately, particularly given that the attacks are not being directed against the terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). It asks those States, which customarily call for the cessation of all forms of hostility and for human rights and international humanitarian law to be

respected, to withdraw from the coalition, which has besmirched their reputations and killed many Syrians in their names.

It must be noted that the forces and aircraft of certain members of the "coalition" have been guilty of providing financial and logistical support to the terrorist organization ISIL. The international community will not forget the crime that American aircraft committed when they bombarded a Syrian Arab Army position in Jabal Thurdah in Dayr al-Zawr, killing many Syrian Arab Army soldiers and personnel of allied forces. ISIL then occupied that area and tightened the siege of Dayr al-Zawr city, thus demonstrating that ISIL and the Americans coordinate with one another. Many reliable sources have reported that American aircraft recently intervened in the evacuation of many ISIL leaders, who were taken to unknown locations. The aim of that action was to cover up the fact that America supports that terrorist organization and others throughout Syria.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls upon the Security Council to act immediately in order to halt the savage crimes and the grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights that are being committed by the "coalition", which violates the territorial integrity of Syria and was established without a request from the Syrian Government or authorization from the United Nations and in contravention of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Government calls upon the States members of the coalition that do not want to be implicated in the killing of Syrian civilians to withdraw from the coalition immediately.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the Security Council to fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. It also calls upon the Council to enforce compliance with and ensure implementation of its resolutions concerning counter-terrorism, including, in particular, resolution 2253 (2015), and to act immediately in order to prevent the coalition from committing additional crimes against innocent civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2017/813

Security Council

Distr.: General
29 September 2017

Original: English

Letter dated 28 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to forward the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, prepared for the high-level Security Council open debate, entitled "Reform of United Nations peacekeeping: implementation and follow-up", held on 20 September 2017 (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gillian **Bird**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 28 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

United Nations peacekeeping operations: reform of United Nations peacekeeping, implementation and follow-up

Statement by Julie Bishop, MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs

I thank Ethiopia for convening this debate and for its leading contribution to peacekeeping missions. Australia is pleased to co-sponsor the peacekeeping resolution put forward today.

Last week, I had the honour of attending a ceremony in Canberra to commemorate 70 years of Australian involvement in United Nations peacekeeping missions. On 14 September 1947, Australia was the first country to deploy military observers to the then Dutch East Indies to monitor and report on the ceasefire.

Since then, we have contributed to 20 other United Nations missions.

Today, peacekeeping is a flagship enterprise of the United Nations and one of the most important global investments in peace and stability.

Contemporary peacekeeping missions, however, face serious challenges.

They often operate in dangerous environments, made more unpredictable by the rise of non-State actors with access to more advanced weapons.

Peacekeepers from many nations are not always as well trained or equipped as they should be.

Also, as United Nations Members are well aware, there have been disturbing cases of misconduct by peacekeepers in the field.

Some important steps have been taken to address these challenges, including:

- The convening of peacekeeping pledging meetings over the past two years, which are generating more personnel and enabling support
- The development of the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, which provide a "best practice" guide to peacekeepers on this core obligation
- The introduction of a number of measures designed to hold accountable those who commit sexual abuse and provide better support for victims
- The adoption of the "sustaining peace" resolutions, which commit the United Nations system to make that a core objective in all its operations.

However, more needs to be done.

The review by the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations in 2015 provided us with the blueprint for reform.

It stressed, in particular, that peacekeepers must be deployed as part of a broader political strategy, where the work of peacekeepers is supported by other tools, such as mediation, humanitarian support and planning for longer-term development.

We must continue to pursue this approach.

We also need improved scrutiny throughout the life of peacekeeping missions. The Security Council needs to ensure that the tasks mandated for each mission continue to be consistent with the political and operational realities on the ground.

I also highlight Security Council resolution 2242 (2015), which calls for the doubling of the number of women peacekeepers by 2020. Australia strongly supports this objective, having helped bring an unprecedented level of attention to this issue during our Security Council term of 2013/14.

Finally, we need high levels of performance and integrity from peacekeepers, underpinned by effective and accountable leadership.

Consistent with this, I encourage the United Nations to continue the mentoring programme it is piloting for heads and deputy heads of peacekeeping missions.

Australia continues to provide policy leadership and development, particularly in areas where we have expertise. We have, for example, gained valuable operational experience in our region during our missions in the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and the autonomous region of Bougainville.

To be chosen to lead a United Nations mission is an honour, while also being a tremendous challenge.

As Member States, we need to ensure that those chosen to lead are given all the support we can muster.

United Nations peacekeeping — which remains perhaps the most recognizable symbol of the United Nations throughout the world — must live up to the aspirations on which it was founded over 70 years ago and continue to be a beacon of hope to communities in conflict zones.

United Nations S/2017/814

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 September 2017

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on my mission of good offices in Cyprus covers developments from 15 May 2015 to 11 August 2017. It focuses on the activities carried out by my good offices mission under the leadership of my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, regarding the leader-led negotiations between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot sides. The Security Council, in its resolution 2369 (2017), its most recent on the subject, noted the outcome of the Conference on Cyprus and encouraged the sides and all participants involved to sustain their commitment to a settlement under United Nations auspices. Echoing the Secretary-General's firm belief that the responsibility for finding a solution lies first and foremost with the Cypriots themselves, the Security Council also expressed its full support for the Secretary-General in continuing to keep his good offices at the disposal of the parties.

II. Background

2. The negotiations between the Greek Cypriot leader, Nicos Anastasiades, and the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mustafa Akıncı, to reach a comprehensive settlement started more than two years ago, on 15 May 2015. Throughout a period of intense and results-oriented talks, the sides were guided by relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014. The recent efforts to find a mutually acceptable settlement have built on the body of work accumulated since the beginning of the fully fledged negotiations in September 2008. In particular, the process continued to follow the original design of the then Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders, Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat, respectively, which had also been in place during the period of negotiations between Mr. Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader at the time, Derviş Eroğlu.

3. As agreed in 2008, the negotiations were organized into six chapters, namely governance and power-sharing, economy, European Union matters, property, territory, and security and guarantees. On 15 May 2015, Mr. Akıncı and Mr. Anastasiades also agreed that the negotiations would be leader-led and would focus in a structured and results-oriented manner on core issues across chapters, as set out in the Joint Declaration. In the conduct of the negotiations, the leaders were supported by their respective negotiators and negotiating teams, as well as by various experts, who were organized into several working groups, as described below.

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III. Status of the process: substantive chapters

4. From 15 May 2015, the sides engaged in intensive, ongoing negotiations. That sustained process experienced short interruptions only on a few occasions, often due to political events and developments that took place outside the talks. The time and effort invested and documentation produced over the more-than-two-year-long process were extensive. The leaders personally engaged in 70 meetings on the island, while their negotiators held more than 150 meetings. The contacts, exchanges and meetings between the various experts in the working groups were no less frequent or substantive: 369 meetings were held at the level of the experts. More than 565 joint papers were exchanged between the sides, recording the progress and convergences achieved over the course of the process. Such intensive and focused engagement at all levels generated unprecedented substantive progress in all the chapters and enabled the convening of the Conference on Cyprus on 12 January 2017 in Geneva.

5. Throughout the negotiations, both sides maintained their agreement that the principles on which the European Union was founded would be respected throughout the island. This allowed them to find solutions to and convergences on a myriad of issues in various negotiating chapters, underscoring the fundamental European character of the settlement that the two leaders were aiming to achieve. For instance, the provision that the rights of all citizens would be respected, regardless of where they resided on the island, was agreed. While safeguarding the bicommunal and bizonal parameters of a settlement, the sides drew on European jurisprudence to remedy the past, as well as on European norms and principles to build a united future. As a result, most issues under the chapter related to European Union matters were largely resolved. The only outstanding issues were related to permanent derogations and primary law, as well as how to determine the joint positions of a future united Cyprus in European Union bodies; the set-up of the Joint Committee on European Union Affairs, and questions regarding infringement and other internal procedures.

6. The sides converged on many topics in the chapter on governance and power-sharing. By January 2017, the contours of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with political equality were well known and had been largely agreed. The views on functions, composition and decision-making procedures, such as the deadlock-resolving mechanisms of the main branches of the federal government, including the federal legislature and federal judiciary, as well as independent officers and the federal public service, had already converged.

7. Federal competencies, cooperation and coordination between the federal government and the constituent states and issues related to citizenship, in particular who would be considered a citizen of the future united Cyprus at the start of the settlement and the criteria for acquiring citizenship in the future were also largely agreed. Importantly, views on the criteria for granting internal citizenship, as defined in the Joint Declaration of 11 February 2014, also converged. The important and often sensitive issue of citizenship, with its links to other key aspects, including the exercise of civil and political rights in the future united Cyprus, was almost completely concluded, with only certain details left to be agreed.

8. The economy chapter was perhaps the closest to being fully completed, and in general the economic issues were among the least contentious aspects of the negotiations. The sides agreed on many of the core principles, policies and institutions to guide the economy of a post-settlement Cyprus, including fiscal federalism, growth-promoting structural reforms, economic convergence between the two communities, the ministries, the central bank, other regulatory bodies,

revenue allocation, taxation, public debt, guarantees and state aid, and monetary policy. In particular, the negotiating teams and their experts worked carefully to balance the principles of fiscal federalism with simplified and effective decision-making. Notably, given recent economic and financial turmoil on the island, the sides negotiated a cooperation agreement that imposed fiscal discipline on the federal government, the constituent states and their subsidiary bodies. The remaining outstanding issues in the economy chapter were mostly related to governance or to implementation and transition.

9. Throughout the process, the sides also worked extensively on the chapter on property. The first key agreement in the chapter was achieved by the leaders on 27 July 2015, when they announced that the individual's right to property would be respected and that there would be alternatives for the regulation of the exercise of that right. The leaders also agreed that dispossessed owners and current users would have various choices regarding their claims to affected properties, including compensation, exchange and reinstatement, and that those would be subject to agreed criteria. Thereafter, progress continued on property, including both on the necessary judicial ad hoc mechanisms, such as the property commission and the property court, and on principles, including the prescription of just satisfaction and the proscription of unjust enrichment, albeit at a slower pace in the last months of negotiations.

10. The chapter on territory is an example of how the sides went further in ownership and leadership in the latest round of negotiations than ever before. It had been the long-held agreement that the chapter would remain the last internal one to be negotiated, with maps and figures to be discussed only at the very end of the negotiation process. Recognizing the progress made since the start of their negotiations, the two leaders decided in October 2016 to hold intensive talks in Mont Pèlerin, Switzerland, formally opening negotiations on the chapter on territory during two rounds in November 2016.

11. During the first round, the leaders secured a significant breakthrough, agreeing on a range for the percentages of land of the constituent states that would result from the territorial adjustment. During the second round, the sides failed to achieve further progress on territory and, therefore, to present their respective maps, returning to the island with a perception that the process risked facing a serious stalemate. The climate surrounding the talks deteriorated rapidly, demonstrating how a small setback in the process could quickly lead to a downward spiral. However, on 1 December 2016, in their first encounter since the end of the second round of Mont Pèlerin meetings, Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı recognized the importance of resuming the talks. They announced that they would meet in Geneva from 9 to 11 January 2017 and that, from 12 January, the Conference on Cyprus would be convened with the added participation of the guarantor Powers; other relevant parties would be invited as needed.

12. The meetings held between 9 and 12 January were a watershed moment in the process. For the first time in the history of the negotiations, the two leaders presented each other with their preferred maps of the internal administrative boundary. The maps were verified by expert cartographers from each side and from the United Nations and were then taken to a vault at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The presentation of maps was an important moment both in itself but also in that it was seen by both sides as a sign that the process was moving towards the "end game".

13. On 12 January 2017, I convened the Conference on Cyprus in Geneva with the added participation of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as that of the

President of the European Commission as an observer. The convening of the negotiations on security and guarantees marked another historic first in the process, opening the international phase of the negotiations and bringing the parties one step closer to a comprehensive settlement.

14. The parameters for solving security and guarantees were set in Geneva. The statement of the Conference on Cyprus of 12 January underscored the need for mutually acceptable solutions that addressed the concerns of both communities, with the overarching principle that the security of one community could not come at the expense of the security of the other. It also established that the solutions envisaged needed to address both communities' traditional security fears, while developing a security vision for the future. Those parameters guided the work of the group of deputies of the Conference, which met one week later in Mont Pèlerin on 18 and 19 January to develop questions and instruments related to security and guarantees.

15. Despite the leap forward, the process experienced another setback shortly thereafter. The controversy between the sides over the decision by the Parliament of Cyprus to introduce an annual commemoration in public schools of the 1950 referendum on "enosis" (union) with Greece resulted in a two-month hiatus in the talks from 16 February to 11 April 2017. This meant that the sides lost crucial time in the negotiations when they had gained significant momentum. It also had a negative impact on the trust between the two leaders and their respective communities.

16. From late January until late June 2017, in preparation for the reconvening of the Conference on Cyprus, my Special Adviser engaged in intensive shuttle diplomacy, visiting Cyprus, Greece and Turkey regularly, with a view to finding mutually acceptable modalities for returning to the Conference and preparing the ground for a successful outcome of the negotiations on security and guarantees. On the basis of the parameters, my Special Adviser worked intensively with all parties to try and reframe the issue of security and guarantees in such a way that could allow the parties to move away from their seemingly irreconcilable positions and begin thinking in new terms about the questions concerned, laying the building blocks for a mutually acceptable solution.

17. To find common ground regarding the said modalities and the sequencing of negotiations at a future session of the Conference on Cyprus, I invited the leaders to New York. During a dinner that I hosted on 4 June, the two leaders agreed on the need to reconvene the Conference in June, in line with the statement of the Conference of 12 January. They recognized the vital importance of security and guarantees to the two communities and the importance of progress in this chapter for reaching an overall agreement. At the same time, they committed to continuing in parallel the bicommunal negotiations on all other outstanding issues, beginning with territory, property and governance and power-sharing. Furthermore, they reaffirmed that all issues would be negotiated interdependently and that nothing would be agreed until everything was agreed.

IV. Crans-Montana meetings

18. On the basis of the above-mentioned commitments, the Conference on Cyprus reconvened on 28 June in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, with the participation of Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom and the Vice-President of the European Commission in his capacity as observer. With the aim of arriving at a strategic agreement on all major outstanding issues across the six chapters of the

negotiations, the Conference was organized in a "two-table" format, one involving the leaders of the two communities dedicated to core outstanding issues relating to territory, property and governance and power-sharing in particular, and the other table dedicated to security and guarantees involving Mr. Anastasiades, Mr. Akıncı, Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union as an observer. Despite differences in their opening positions and public rhetoric, I could see from my in-depth engagement with the three guarantors in Crans-Montana that they had all come to Switzerland committed to seeking mutually acceptable solutions.

19. Despite a positive mood and constructive statements made during the opening day of the Conference, real progress quickly became hampered by the reluctance of parties at one table to make compromises unless demonstrated progress had been made at the other table, and vice versa. In an effort to resolve that dilemma, on 30 June I presented the parties with a framework for simultaneously resolving six major outstanding issues at both tables as elements of a final package that, in my view, would lead to a comprehensive settlement. The elements were related to territory, political equality, property, equivalent treatment, and security and guarantees.

20. The core outstanding issues related to governance and power-sharing remained few, relating mostly to effective participation and, more specifically, to the composition and decision-making of certain low-level federal bodies and institutions, as well as the federal executive, namely whether there would be a rotating presidency. In addition, differences remained as to whether, following a settlement agreement, Turkish nationals would be extended equivalent treatment in Cyprus to that enjoyed by Greek nationals in their capacity as citizens of the European Union.

21. Acknowledging the importance of those three core issues, together with the fundamental issue of security and guarantees, to the conclusion of a strategic agreement, I included them as elements of the final package. Further progress was achieved on all three of the issues in Crans-Montana. By the end of the Conference, the sides had reached practically full agreement on the federal executive and effective participation. With regard to equivalent treatment, although some differences remained, they were limited in scope principally to the issue of free movement of persons, which officials of the European Commission present in the negotiations qualified as limited and possible to accommodate through practical solutions.

22. Progress was also made on property, with an understanding being reached that there would be a property regime leaning largely towards current users in areas that would not be subject to territorial adjustment and a property regime that would lean towards dispossessed owners in areas that would be subject to territorial adjustment. This left little outstanding with respect to an overarching property settlement framework, even though various details remained to be agreed upon with regard to the exact criteria that would apply in each of the two regimes.

23. Regarding territory, following the presentation of the sides' respective maps in Geneva in January 2017, no further discussions had taken place. During my bilateral meetings in Crans-Montana, it appeared that an agreement on territorial adjustment was within reach. The issue could, however, be concluded only as part of a final package.

24. The complexity and importance of the chapter on security and guarantees derive from the fact that it recalls traumas experienced by the Cypriot communities in the past and sets the framework whereby the future security of Cyprus and the new state of affairs established by a settlement agreement shall be safeguarded.

Consequently, the chapter, perhaps more than others, has been the subject of different, often conflicting, narratives and has generated seemingly irreconcilable positions. Thus, I proposed that the parties identify solutions while taking into account the fact that the current system of guarantees, in particular article IV of the Treaty of Guarantee, containing the unilateral right of intervention, was "unsustainable". I also suggested that a new system of security was needed for Cyprus, as was a credible framework for monitoring the implementation of the agreement in which the current guarantors would play a role. On the question of the presence of Greek and Turkish troops in Cyprus, it was agreed that any outstanding issues regarding troops would best be addressed at the highest political level involving the Prime Ministers of the three guarantor Powers.

25. I returned to Crans-Montana on 6 July to assist the parties in arriving at a strategic understanding of the six elements that I had identified on 30 June. It was only upon my return that some of the most essential elements were considered. During confidential bilateral meetings, key positions and indications of possible openings were put forward by relevant parties, particularly on the issues related to security and guarantees. It was underscored repeatedly by several of the parties, however, that those were to be taken as part of the overall package that I had presented. During a dinner for the heads of delegation, I shared my assessment that there was a broad understanding of the parameters of the potential strategic agreement. I also presented the parties with a draft implementation monitoring framework in the form of a non-paper for their consideration.

26. Regrettably, during the dinner, while the six elements of the package were largely available, the parties were unable to finalize a package and bridge remaining differences. While the parties were moving closer on substance, they remained far apart with respect to the trust and determination necessary to seek common ground through mutual accommodation, ultimately preventing them from reaching the broad outlines of a strategic understanding across the negotiating chapters that could have paved the way for the final settlement deal. Therefore, no agreement could be reached to convene the Prime Ministers. As a result, the parties concurred with my conclusion that the Conference would likely not achieve a result and should be closed.

27. By the time the Conference closed, the sides had essentially solved the key issue of effective participation. While some differences remained on the equivalent treatment of Turkish nationals with regard to the issue of free movement of persons, they were a question of certain details rather than principles. An incipient agreement was also emerging on territorial adjustment. With regard to property, the sides had agreed in principle on two separate property regimes, while some details again remained. Finally, the participants had significantly advanced in developing a security concept, on the assumption that agreement was reached on all domestic aspects of the settlement to the satisfaction of both communities.

V. Status of the process: other features

28. Undoubtedly, the progress in the latest round of negotiations was unique in many respects, including a number of new elements and benefiting from unprecedented support from a wide variety of international actors. This placed the leaders and their negotiators in an optimal position to gather and utilize expertise on many of the issues being discussed at the table and to start preparations for the implementation of a deal well in advance. In view of a potential settlement deal, during a joint meeting on 29 January 2016, the leaders committed to engaging in preparatory technical work, alongside their substantive negotiations, in four priority

areas: drafting of the federal constitution, technical preparations for the implementation of European Union *acquis communautaire* in a future Turkish Cypriot constituent state, ongoing work with international financial institutions on the economic aspects of the settlement and planning for implementation.

29. While there was progress registered in a few of the technical priority areas, in others progress was slow or never materialized. Despite repeated encouragement from my Special Adviser, a proposed constitution-drafting working group did not begin deliberations. Not consolidating convergences reached in the negotiations into constitutional text created uncertainties and did not allow for full preparations in the other legal work streams. Similarly, work on planning for the implementation of the settlement did not go beyond a handful of meetings at the level of leaders and negotiators and initial position papers exchanged on the matter.

30. Regrettably, therefore, the potential of the agreed upon engagement and the high level of support available was not always utilized to the fullest and, on several occasions, was hampered by internally created delays and other challenges. Furthermore, the fact that the two communities were not accustomed to working together on certain issues, owing primarily to the status quo and the continuing division of the island, presented some challenges.

31. One prominent feature of the latest round of talks was the agreement between the sides to enable the European Union to play an enhanced role in the peace process in conjunction with my good offices. That role was further strengthened through the consistent support of the political leadership of the European Union for the efforts of my Special Adviser, demonstrated by the personal engagement of the President of the European Commission through several visits to the island by high-level European Commission officials and their high-level engagement during the Conference on Cyprus in Geneva and in Crans-Montana. The Personal Representative of the President of the European Commission to my good offices mission, together with a small team deployed in Cyprus in 2015, remained fully engaged in the process, enabling unprecedented structural integration of the Commission's support into the process under the auspices of the United Nations.

32. The European Commission's engagement to help to prepare for the implementation of the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union in a future Turkish Cypriot constituent state also led to several key developments. On 3 October 2015, the sides reached an agreement to set up the Bicommunal Ad Hoc Committee on European Union Preparation to facilitate that work. Furthermore, on 4 February 2016, the two negotiators carried out an unprecedented joint visit to the European Commission headquarters in Brussels to request the intensification of the European Union technical assistance provided within the framework of the Bicommunal Ad Hoc Committee. Following that visit, it was agreed that the Commission would conduct fact-finding missions to the north of the island to identify gaps and propose technical assistance, where appropriate.

33. By mid-2017, in spite of repeated interruptions to their work usually connected to dynamics in the talks, the European Commission had carried out fact-finding missions in all priority areas identified by the two negotiators: customs, immigration and border control, plant and animal health, food safety, currency, competition and taxation, free movement of goods, market surveillance and single market and European Union funds. On that basis, the Commission arrived at an initial assessment of the preparedness of the Turkish Cypriot community, which was presented to the two leaders on 10 May 2017. Shortly thereafter, the Commission also shared its in-depth assessment by circulating the reports of the fact-finding mission to both communities on 5 June 2017. In all, the Commission, under United Nations auspices, conducted no fewer than 125 working group meetings, seminars

and fact-finding missions involving hundreds of Commission experts who specialize in different areas of the European Union *acquis*.

34. Uniquely, the economic aspects of the negotiations also benefited from extensive and unprecedented support from European bodies and international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which implemented an accelerated programme of technical assistance to the two sides under the auspices of the United Nations. That engagement stemmed from the leaders' request to my Special Adviser to seek expert technical assistance with the aim of supporting the two communities in finding sustainable solutions to economic issues in a post-settlement Cyprus, as noted in my previous reports. The support of the European Union bodies in this area related to the financial aspects of the European Union *acquis*, as well as eurozone requirements, with the bulk of the assistance provided by experts from the European Commission and the European Central Bank. The support from the international financial institutions was truly substantial. Since the accelerated programme began in November 2015, the International Monetary Fund has spent a total of 294 mission days on the island, while the World Bank has spent a total of 430 mission days in Cyprus, with broad participation by senior staff and experts from both institutions.

35. The work of the international financial institutions included assessments and diagnostics on the financial sectors, macroeconomic and fiscal frameworks, social protection and health, and the public administration of a future united Cyprus. In addition, the institutions formulated forward-looking recommendations on revenue policies, debt management and the economic impacts of a settlement, including property settlement. In order to coordinate that wide-ranging work, my Special Adviser and his team chaired regular detailed discussions by videoconference with the relevant institutions providing support to the talks.

36. While the overall economic framework for a united federal Cyprus was largely agreed, preparations to implement the economic aspects of the settlement remained slow. Work on implementation planning, which was supposed to be a largely technical exercise, instead became politicized over time. Political forces in each community that were opposed to a settlement were able to leverage their positions in political and administrative bodies to slow implementation preparations. The lack of progress on certain aspects of implementation then became a recurring argument in the negotiating room itself.

37. Throughout the process, the sides also engaged in intense work at the level of the various working groups of experts, as well as the technical committees. In particular, working groups of experts on property, economy and European Union matters met regularly to hold focused discussions at the technical level. In addition, in 2015 and early 2016, the leaders agreed to the establishment of four legal expert groups to address the drafting of a federal constitution, the preparation of federal laws, the functioning of the federal and constituent judiciaries and the international treaty obligations of a united Cyprus.

38. The working group on federal laws met regularly. Despite the obstacles created by the lack of a corresponding draft constitution, the sides agreed on a large number of federal laws that would have to be in place at the entry into force of a settlement. Although progress was made, a substantial amount remained outstanding by the time the sides met in Crans-Montana. The legal experts in the treaties working group had commenced reviewing the compatibility of the international agreements entered into by the sides with the settlement and European and international law. However, while the sides exchanged updated lists and began providing initial comments, a full review was not initiated. The sides also had an

initial exchange of views on a number of issues in the judiciary working group, which did not, however, produce tangible results.

39. Throughout the reporting period, the bicommunal technical committees, which had been established in 2008 as part of the process to work on confidence-building measures aimed not only at improving the everyday lives of Cypriots but also at encouraging and facilitating greater interaction among them, continued to work in support of a possible settlement, especially since the leader-led negotiation process intensified in the last quarter of 2016. In addition to the technical committees established in 2008, Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı agreed to set up ones that focused on specific issues, such as gender, education and culture. Since 15 May 2015, 15 technical committees had been working on initiatives in support of the talks and a total of 339 meetings had been held by the time the Conference on Cyprus reconvened in Crans-Montana. However, the success of the committees in formulating and implementing confidence-building measures was mixed, and their overall impact on the daily lives of the population in both communities continued to be limited. This was due to various factors, including a lack of material and organizational support, as well as limited high-level political support for their work, given that more emphasis was often placed on the ongoing "track one" negotiations between the leaders to reach a comprehensive settlement. Despite the small number of measures implemented, there were some very successful initiatives and promising beginnings, such as the much-appreciated restoration work on historical buildings and monuments of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage and the launch by the Technical Committee on Education of the "Imagine" project, bringing Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot children together to interact and learn side by side. Those initiatives demonstrated that, with the necessary support and political will, the two communities could work together to implement confidence-building measures aimed at improving the daily life of all Cypriots across the island and creating conditions conducive to a successful settlement process.

40. Following the closure of the Conference on Cyprus on 7 July 2017, it remains unclear whether all the technical committees will continue to meet and whether the sides intend to implement already agreed confidence-building measures or pursue new ones. A few technical committees have held meetings since, noting that it has become more important than ever to carry on some of the work that would benefit both communities. I believe that it is important to continue the support of the United Nations for the work of the technical committees, particularly during this period of political uncertainty. Because of the bicommunal nature of the technical committees, they have the potential to sustain the gains achieved so far in the Cyprus peace talks and to continue to contribute to the development of further confidence-building measures and peacebuilding efforts.

41. Heeding the many calls for greater inclusion of a gender perspective in the negotiations, on 28 May 2015 Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı agreed to establish the Committee on Gender Equality. The mandate of the Committee included a clear reference to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The sides proceeded quickly with the appointment of their respective members of the Committee, which comprised both men and women. The Committee held its first meeting in August 2015 and initially met quite regularly. It carried out in-depth analysis of important and relevant gender issues and provided some recommendations to the leaders and their negotiators. Regrettably, however, their recommendations were not always mainstreamed into the deliberations at the negotiation table, and the impact of the work of the Committee on relevant substantive issues being negotiated remained quite limited.

42. As soon as the talks between Mr. Anastasiades and Mr. Akıncı started on 15 May 2015, as a sign of their shared commitment the leaders agreed on a number

of confidence-building measures that would mutually benefit the two communities. While progress was made on some of those measures over the past two years, particularly on issues such as demining, the removal of visa requirements and increased access for the Committee on Missing Persons, the implementation of other confidence-building measures such as the opening of additional crossing points lagged behind or did not register any progress for months. Regrettably, the sides have yet to implement the earlier agreements on the interconnectivity of electricity grids and the interoperability of mobile telephones.

43. In the early stages of the process, the leaders had also made highly visible and important attempts to increase the frequency of their joint public appearances, such as addressing a conference organized by the two Chambers of Commerce on the economic benefits of a settlement on 8 July 2015, as well as jointly attending a concert organized by the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage held in Famagusta on 28 July 2015. Furthermore, they made an appearance at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2016, jointly addressing the plenary of that high-level meeting, committing themselves to seeking a settlement within 2016 and promoting the economic opportunities of a future united Cyprus. On 15 May 2016, the leaders issued a statement marking the first year of their negotiations in which they affirmed their commitment to intensifying efforts in the following months with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement within 2016. The events were perceived as a sign of their strong joint commitment and helped to foster confidence in the process and galvanize public support for the talks. The number of such appearances and initiatives dwindled, however, over the course of the process. Moreover, as the negotiations moved forward and the issues being discussed at the table became more complex, the leaders became increasingly focused on their respective communities, forgoing more often than not opportunities for joint public communication and appearances.

44. In my previous report (S/2016/599), I encouraged the leaders to strengthen their efforts to communicate jointly through coordinated messaging. When the leaders did address the communities together, for instance during their joint New Year's message in 2015, the results were a resounding success, with the public responding overwhelmingly positively.

VI. Observations

45. It is my assessment that, thanks to the tireless and determined efforts of the leaders and their teams and the unwavering support provided by the international community, the essence of a comprehensive settlement to the Cyprus problem is practically there. The parties had come close to reaching a strategic understanding on security and guarantees, as well as on all other outstanding core elements of a comprehensive settlement. It is therefore my firm belief that a historic opportunity was missed in Crans-Montana.

46. Upon closing the Conference on Cyprus, I encouraged the sides to reflect on the way forward. Even if all the core enablers are in place, as they appeared to be in Crans-Montana in late June, I am convinced that the prospects of finally pushing this process "over the finishing line" will remain elusive without the strongest of political will, courage and determination, mutual trust and a readiness on the part of all parties to take calculated risks in the last and most difficult mile of the negotiations. I remain equally convinced that, in the framework of a renewed process, if a comprehensive settlement is to be successful in simultaneous

referendums, the parties should lose no time in engaging the public and jointly building support for a unified future.

47. I thus reiterate my call to the leaders, their respective communities and other interested parties, including the guarantor Powers, to continue such reflection to determine if and when conditions will mature again for a meaningful process in the near future. I reaffirm the readiness of the United Nations to assist the sides, should they jointly decide to engage in such a process with the necessary political will, in order to conclude the strategic agreement that was emerging in Crans-Montana. Furthermore, I encourage them to seek ways to preserve the body of work that had been built throughout the process in the form of convergences and understandings accumulated in the course of the past two years.

48. It is my firm belief that, for a process of such complexity and political sensitivity to be successful, a package approach on specific key issues, such as the one that guided the discussions during the meetings in Crans-Montana, would need to be followed. In the future, agreement should be pursued at the strategic level on key outstanding issues, which would form the basis for the comprehensive settlement and, following the conclusion of a strategic agreement, the details of which would need to be worked out at the technical level. An early agreement at the strategic level would immediately provide each side with the needed reassurance that the overall settlement would contain those elements that are of key importance for each community and thus provide impetus for completion of the remaining technical details.

49. I commend the work of the international financial institutions and relevant European Union bodies in support of the sides on economic aspects of the talks. The close cooperation among the international financial institutions under the auspices of my good offices mission yielded significant results. The institutions provided timely and helpful technical assistance and support to the leaders and negotiating teams in jointly designing an economically sustainable agreement that maximizes an expected peace dividend, reduces risks in the post-settlement period and promotes human security across the island. Should a settlement agreement be reached, the diagnostic assessments and technical advice provided by the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would need to be transformed into capacity-building assistance directed at both communities, as needed, in order to prepare Cyprus for reunification.

50. In conclusion, I wish to thank my Special Adviser, Espen Barth Eide, and my Special Representative, Elizabeth Spehar, and the personnel serving in my good offices mission in Cyprus for the dedication and perseverance with which they facilitated the talks over the past two years and the commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

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Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the forty-eighth monthly report of the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2017.

With regard to the 27 chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, the work to confirm the current condition of the two remaining above-ground facilities is continuing. The completion of that work is necessary for the full implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), and I look forward to further progress in this regard.

Turning to the outstanding issues relating to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic, I welcome the fact that the high-level consultations between OPCW and the Syrian Arab Republic were held, as scheduled, from 16 to 18 September 2017. It is my hope that these consultations will produce a tangible outcome by way of resolving the outstanding issues related to the initial declaration, thereby increasing the confidence of the international community that the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic has been fully eliminated, as required by resolution 2118 (2013). I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with OPCW towards that goal.

The OPCW fact-finding mission in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to study all available information related to allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In this regard, impunity cannot be tolerated, and I repeat my call for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons to be held accountable and reaffirm that the use of such weapons under any circumstances, and by any party, is similarly intolerable.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism is continuing its in-depth investigations into the incidents involving the use of chemical weapons in Umm Hawsh and Khan Shaykhun. It will report its substantive findings on the two incidents in October 2017. I reiterate my utmost confidence that the present report will demonstrate the implementation by the Joint Investigative Mechanism of its mandate in an independent, impartial and objective manner. I stress the previous determination by the Security Council that the use of chemical weapons anywhere constitutes a threat

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to international peace and security and a serious violation of international law. I urge the Security Council to demonstrate the unity necessary to ensure that those who have used chemical weapons are held accountable, in order to deter and put an end to those inhumane acts, for which there can be no impunity.

I thank all Member States for their cooperation and support for the work of the Mechanism.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 August to 22 September 2017 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet Üzümcü

Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

Note by the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

Background

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director-General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. The Council, at its Eighty-Third Session, adopted a decision entitled "OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Reports on Chemical Weapons Use in the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-83/DEC.5, dated 11 November 2016). In subparagraph 12(a) of that decision, the Council decided that the Director-General shall "regularly inform the Council on the implementation of this decision and incorporate information regarding the implementation of this decision into his monthly reporting to the United Nations Security Council, through the United Nations Secretary-General, regarding EC-M-33/DEC.1".

5. This, the forty-eighth monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions and includes information relevant to the period from 23 August 2017 to 22 September 2017.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

6. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 25 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. During the period under review, the Secretariat has continued the preparatory work

to carry out an initial inspection to confirm the current condition of the last two stationary above-ground facilities.

(b) On 14 September 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its forty-sixth monthly report (EC-86/P/NAT.4, dated 15 September 2017) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

7. As stated in previous reports, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decisions EC-81/DEC.4 and EC-83/DEC.5

8. As reported previously, an invitation was sent to the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic, H.E. Dr Faisal Mekdad, and his delegation, to resume high-level consultations to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic in accordance with Council decision EC-81/DEC.4 and paragraph 6 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5. The Director-General will report separately to the Council on those consultations, which took place at the OPCW Headquarters from 16 to 18 September 2017.

9. In accordance with paragraph 11 of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, the Secretariat has continued planning for the second round of inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) in the Syrian Arab Republic, to be conducted in the second half of 2017.

10. In accordance with subparagraph 12(a) of Council decision EC-83/DEC.5, a report on the status of implementation of that decision (EC-86/DG.21, dated 21 September 2017) was submitted to the States Parties.

Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

11. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives of the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian Arab Republic, met in Beirut, Lebanon, from 24 to 26 August 2017, to review the status of ongoing activities in light of the tripartite agreement (between UNOPS, the OPCW, and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic) and the contribution agreement (between the OPCW and UNOPS). During that meeting, the Syrian Arab Republic enquired about the possibility to convert one of the two remaining stationary above-ground facilities for purposes not prohibited under the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter "the Convention"). The Secretariat recalled the provisions of the Convention concerning the conditions for such conversion, including the requirement for a State Party to submit a formal request to the Director-General.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). As at the cut-off date of this report, the total contribution stood at EUR 11.5 million, with forthcoming additional donations.

Contribution agreements had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, and the European Union.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

14. Guided by Council decisions EC-M-48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM has continued to study all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the period under review, the FFM continued to carry out its inquiries on credible allegations reported from December 2015 until the end of March 2017, on which information and materials are available.

15. The OPCW has also continued to extend its full cooperation and support to the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism.

Conclusion

16. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will be on the activities of the FFM and on the implementation of Council decisions EC-83/DEC.5 and EC-81/DEC.4, including declaration-related issues, as well as on the confirmation of the status of the two stationary above-ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.

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Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a comment by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, dated 22 September 2017, on the "sentence" of the so-called "Zaliznychnyi district court of the city of Simferopol" in the case of a citizen of Ukraine, Mykola Semena (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Amoassador
Permanent Representative

17-17197 (E) 041017

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Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the "sentence" of the so-called "Zaliznychnyi district court of the city of Simferopol" in the case of a citizen of Ukraine, Mykola Semena

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its resolute protest over yet another shameful act of infringement of the fundamental freedoms and the rights of Ukrainian citizen, journalist Mykola Semena.

The groundless and politically motivated "sentence" of Mykola Semena by the occupation court to 2.5 years in prison with probation proves again that repressions are targeted by the aggressor state against the residents of the occupied Ukrainian territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine calls upon the foreign governments and international human rights organizations not to leave the new attack by Russia, the aggressor state, against fundamental freedoms on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea without response.

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Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a comment by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, dated 25 September 2017, on the Moscow City Court's decision in the case of Roman Sushchenko, who is illegally detained in Russia (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the Moscow City Court's decision in the case of Roman Sushchenko, who is illegally detained in Russia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its strong protest with regard to the Moscow City Court's decision as of September 25, 2017, on the two months extension of detention of Ukrainian journalist Roman Sushchenko, who is illegally detained in Russia under the fabricated charges.

The unjustified detention of Ukrainian journalist in the Russian Federation under politically motivated charges of espionage is yet another proof of the absence of a justice system and the right to a fair trial in this country.

We call on the international community, international human rights institutions to take all possible legal, political and economic measures to release and return to Ukraine its citizens, who are illegally detained on the territory of Russia under fabricated, politically motivated charges.

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Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a comment by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the thematic report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)" (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the thematic report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights entitled "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)"

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine welcomes the thematic report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights "Situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)" launched on September 25. This report is a result of the hard fact finding work on the systematic violations of human rights by the Russian Federation in the illegally occupied Crimea, the logical summarizing and generalization of human rights violations recorded and documented by OHCHR during the period from February 2014 to September 2017.

The scale of internationally wrongful acts and human rights violations committed by the Russian occupation authorities in the Crimea prove that the Russian Federation blatantly violates its international legal obligations under The Hague and Geneva Conventions. In addition to the facts of explicit crimes committed by the occupation authorities in the Crimea against the Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and all those who continue to bravely oppose the Russian occupation, the report contains a number of specific cases of illegal detention, enforced disappearances and abductions, extrajudicial executions and other violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

We proceed from the premises that the report is the first step towards the systematic implementation of the provisions of the UNGA Resolution 71/205, which, together with the GA Resolution 68/262, are the basic documents that confirm the territorial integrity of Ukraine, condemn the temporary occupation the part of Ukraine's territory — AR Crimea and Sevastopol — by the Russian Federation, and they do not recognize the annexation of the peninsula.

We emphasize once again, that only with the comprehensive implementation of the above-mentioned UNGA resolutions and the consolidation of international pressure on Russia as an occupying power, one can achieve a partial improvement of the human rights situation, including the implementation by Russia of the order of the International Court of Justice in case Ukraine vs the Russian Federation regarding the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Ukraine, at all stages of the preparation of the report, supported the OHCHR and the UN Human Rights Mission in Ukraine activities, having spared no effort to ensure that the Mission's experts were able to access the temporarily occupied territory of Crimea. Unfortunately, contrary to the requirements of the Resolution 71/205 and the numerous calls of the international community, this time the Russian Federation has once again ignored the UN mandate. As a result, the UN observers have been prevented from visiting the occupied territory of the peninsula.

Ensuring permanent direct international monitoring of the situation by the existing conventional and institutional mechanisms of the United Nations and other international organizations that, among other factors, will play a role of the control mechanism to monitor Russia's compliance with its obligations as an occupying

power, in accordance with international humanitarian law, remains one of the priorities of the international democratic community.

We call upon the Secretary-General and the High Commissioner of the United Nations to continue their efforts to fully implement Resolution 71/205.

We expect that the international community will continue the systematic pressure on the Russian Federation with the aim to end the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally occupied Crimea as well as to achieve the de-occupation of the peninsula.

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Letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the illegal sentencing of the Deputy Head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, Ilmi Umerov (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 27 September 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the illegal sentencing of the Deputy Head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, Ilmi Umerov

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its resolute protest against the criminal, illegal and politically motivated sentence towards one of the leaders of Crimea Tatars' national movement, Deputy Head of Mejlis Mr. Ilmi Umerov, whom the Kremlin's occupation authorities ordered to imprison for 2 years in penal settlement. The sentence looks especially cynical taking into account Mr. Umerov's age and the state of health. The lack of proper health assistance in imprisonment may lead to catastrophic consequences for him.

In spite of international pressure, Russia continues to exercise its shameful policy of oppression against independent leaders of the occupied Crimea, including Crimea Tatars, with a view of intimidating all pro-Ukrainian community of the peninsula. The Russian occupants do not only commit the gross violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, but also ignore the relevant decisions taken by the international institutions, in particular UN General Assembly Resolution "Situation of Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)" of 19 December 2016 and the International Court of Justice Order on the Provisional Measures within the claim of Ukraine against Russia on the application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine calls on international partners of Ukraine to properly assess this illegal and politically motivated decision as well as to demand from Russia to immediately release Mr. Umerov. Only strong international political solidarity strengthened with economic sanctions is able to counter the Kremlin's criminal and aggressive policy as well as to stop the full destruction of fundamental human rights and freedoms in the temporarily occupied Crimean peninsula.